Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 198996 TOSEC 090031
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

66011
DRAFTED BY:NEA:JCOLLINS
APPROVED BY:NEA:JCOLLINS
S/S-O:SVALERGA
----------124415 072159Z /15
O 072111Z AUG 78 ZFF5
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE 8298

S E C R E T STATE 198996 TOSEC 090031

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO AMMAN
CAIRO DAMASCUS JERUSALEM TEL AVIV USUN NEW YORK 07 AUG.

QUOTE: S E C R E T BEIRUT 4520

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MARR LE SY IS PEPR
SUBJ: REPORTED REMARKS OF HIGH-RANKING SYRIAN MILITARY OFFICER
ON SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH DCM AND EMBOFF ON AUGUST 7, NORWEGIAN CHARGE HANS LONGVA NOTED THAT HE HAD MET IN DAMASCUS ON AUGUST 6 WITH A "HIGH-RANKING SYRIAN MILITARY OFFICER" WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED KHADDAM TO BEIRUT ON AUGUST 3. (CHIEF OF STAFF HIKMAT SHIHABI WAS TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THE ONLY SUCH PERSON TO HAVE MADE THE TRIP.) THIS OFFICER HAD SAID THE FOLLOWING:

A. KHADDAM'S VISIT TO BEIRUT HAD BEEN A FAILURE. PRESIDENT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 198996 TOSEC 090031

SARKIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS HAD TOLD KHADDAM THEY FAVORED RENEWAL OF THE ADF MANDATE FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS BEGINNING IN OCTOBER, BUT THE LEBANESE HAD REFUSED TO REQUST RENEWAL FORMALLY. KHADDAM HAD REPLIED THAT SYRIAN SOLDIERS WOULD NOT REMAIN IN LEBANON WHEN THE PRESENT ADF MANDATE EXPIRED, IF THE LEBANESE DID NOT FORMALLY REQUEST AN EXTENSION. IN CONTRAST TO SARKIS AND BOUTROS, PRIME MINISTER HOSS' SEEMED TO FAVOR ASKING FOR AN

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

EXTENSION NOW.

B. KHADDAM IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LEBANESE HAD OFFERED TO: (1) ALLOW THE LEBANESE ARMY TO TAKE OVER SECURITY FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE CITY, AND (2) TO WITHDRAW ALL SYRIAN FORCES FROM EAST AND WEST BEIRUT AND TO STATION THEM ON THE HILLS SURROUNDING THE CITY. BOUTROS HAD REFUSED THIS OFFER, HOWEVER, SAYING THAT CIVIL WAR WOULD BREAK OUT IMMEDIATELY BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS IF THE SYRIANS LEFT THE CITY. BOUTROS HAD PROPOSED INSTEAD THAT THE SYRIANS REMAIN IN THE CITY, AND THAT THE GOL BE ALLOWED TO CONTROL HOW THE SYRIANS WOULD RESPOND TO ANY CHRISTIAN PROVOCATIONS. KHADDAM HAD REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL AND SAID THE SYRIANS MUST HAVE A FREE HAND ON DECIDING HOW TO RESPOND TO CHRISTIAN FIRE.

2. "THE HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICER" ALSO OFFERED THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS, LONGVA SAID:

A. WITH REGARD TO THE RECENT VOTE OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CUT AID TO SYRIA, IF THE PRESENT "PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN" AGAINST DAMASCUS CONTINUED, SARG WOULD BE FACED WITH TWO CHOICES: (A) WITHDRAWAL, OR (B) A SHORT BUT MAJOR MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA. THE LATTER OPTION WAS MORE LIKELY.

B. SYRIAN SOLDIERS IN LEBANON WERE TAKING ABOUT 15 CASUALTIES PER WEEK. IF THE GOVERNMENT IN DAMASCUS FORBADE RETALIATION FOR

SECRET

THESE CASUALTIES, THE SYRIAN ARMY IN LEBANON WOULD LIKELY MUTINY.

3. LONGVA ALSO NOTED THAT THE "HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICER" HAD SHOWN AN ALMOST BENIGN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ISRAELI POSITION. THE OFFICER HAD NOTED:

A. THE ISRAELIS DID NOT REALLY BELIEVE THE SYRIANS HAD ACCOMPANIED THE LEBANESE ARMY TO KAWKABA, BUT HAD MADE SUCH AN ASSERTION ONLY BECAUSE HADDAD HAD INSISTED ON IT. INDEED, THIS ASSERTION WAS SO RIDICULOUS, THE ISRAELIS HAD PROBABLY MADE IT PRIMARILY TO EMBARRASS HADDAD.

B. THE ISRAELIS HAD STRONG INFLUENCE, BUT NOT TOTAL CONTROL OVER HADDAD. ISRAEL HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SOMEWHAT THE INTERESTS OF HADDAD AND THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN BEIRUT, AS LONG AS ISRAEL DID NOT WANT TO CUT ITS TIES COMPLETELY WITH THEM.

C. THE CHRISTIANS WERE INCORRECT IN BELIEVING THAT ISRAEL WOULD INTERVENE IN LEBANON DIRECTLY ON THEIR BEHALF.

4. COMMENT: IF KHADDAM IN FACT OFFERED TO WITHDRAW SYRIAN TROOPS FROM BEIRUT IN FAVOR OF LEBANESE SOLDIERS, THIS COULD BE A MAJOR

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

CHANGE IN THE SYRIAN POSITION. ALL OUR LEBANESE SOURCES TELL US, HOWEVER, THAT THE SYRIANS WILL NOT WITHDRAW AND ALLOW THE LEBANESE ARMY TO REPLACE THEM AT PRESENT. END COMMENT.
PARKER

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, TOSEC
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE198996
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:JCOLLINS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780323-0423
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780890/aaaacxzh.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 905c9a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1816619
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED REMARKS OF HIGH-RANKING SYRIAN MILITARY OFFICER ON SITUATION IN LEBANON
TAGS: MARR, PEPR, LE, SY, IS
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/905c9a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014